

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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ESUBJ: MEDIA REACTION TO FORD ACCESSION

REF: USIA 17119

1. SUMMARY. MANY SUNDAY PAPERS BANNER PRESIDENT FORD'S MEETING WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS AND MESSAGES TO ARAB LEADERS, ESPECIALLY PRES FRANJIEH. PRO-WEST AND INDEPENDENT PAPERS DO THIS POSITIVELY, BUT PRO-FEDAYEEN AND COMMUNIST PARTY PAPERS CONTRAST "STRONG" MESSAGE TO RABIN WITH MESSAGES TO ARAB LEADERS. NEWS TREATMENT FOLLOWS THAT OF WIRE SERVICES, ALTHOUGH PRO-WEST AND INDEPENDENT PAPERS PICK UP ON USIS EFFORTS AND REPORT APPOINTMENT OF "FRIEND OF ARABS" WILLIAM SCRANTON TO TRANSITION TEAM AND PRESIDENT'S PAST STATEMENTS ON MIDEAST PEACE. EDITORIAL REACTION CONTINUE TO FOLLOW PREVIOUSLY REPORTED LINES. END SUMMARY.

2. LEADING INDEPENDENT AN-NAHAR BANNERS: "KISSINGER REASSURES ARAB AMBASSADORS: AMERICA'S POLICY WILL NOT CHANGE." PRO-WEST AL-HAYAT BANNERS: "VERY FRIENDLY MESSAGE FROM FORD TO FRANJIEH. NEW PRESIDENT REASSURES ARAB LEADERS: I WILL FOLLOW WHAT NIXON WOULD HAVE DONE TO SOLVE CRISIS." PRO-EGYPTIAN AL-YAWM BANNERS:

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"AS HE DELIVERS MEMORANDUM TO RABIN ON MILITARY AND ECONOMIC

ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL, FOR REASSURES EGYPT AND ARABS:
KISSINGER WILL CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS FOR MIDEAST PEACE."
LEADING LEFTIST PRO-FEDAYEEN AL-MUHARRIR BANNERS: "FORD TO
ISRAEL: WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT YOU STRONGLY. AND TO
ARAB AMBASSADORS: KISSINGER WILL CONTINUE HIS PEACE MISSION**"

3. PRO-WEST AL-HAYAT LEADS ITS MAIN NEWS STORY WITH: "NEW
AMERICAN PRES GERALD FORD HAS SUCCEEDED IN REDUCING
ARAB ANXIETY OVER POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN AMERICAN POLICY
ON MIDEAST QUESTION." SEVERAL PAPERS REPORT APPOINTMENT OF
WILLIAM SCRANTON TO TRANSITION TEAM. INDEPENDENT L'ORIENT-
LE JOUR HEADLINES REPORT WITH: "W. SCRANTON IN FORD'S
BRAIN THRUST -- NIXON'S ENVOY TO MIDEAST IN 1968, HE HAD
PROPOSED MORE BALANCED POLICY IN AREA." SEVERAL PAPERS ALSO
REPORT PRESIDENT'S PAST STATEMENTS ON MIDEAST PEACE.
LEADING INDEPENDENT AN-NAHAR HEADLINES THESE WITH: "FORD
QUOTES PHRASE OF IBN KHALDUN -- AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BEIRUT
DISTRIBUTES STATEMENTS BY NEW PRES ON NECESSITY OF
PEACE IN MIDEAST."

4. EDITORIAL COMMENT FOLLOWS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED LINES.
MICHEL ABU JAWDEH, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF LEADING INDEPENDENT
AN-NAHAR, WRITES: "IS IS MOST LIKELY THAT NO CHANGE WIL
OCCUR IN AMERICAN POLICY. DR KISSINGER HAS BEEN RETAINED
FOR THIS PURPOSE, NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF CHANGE. ALSO,
PRES FORD MEANS WHAT HE SAYS IN SAYING THERE IS NO
CHANGE IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. IT IS ALSO MOST LIKELY
THAT ALL THAT WILL BE REQUIRED OF ARABS WILL BE TO KEEP
ADMINISTRATION OF PRES FORD CONTINUOUSLY AWARE OF
DANGERS OF CHANGE AND ADVANTAGES OF CONTINUING AND DEVELOPING
PRESENT POLICY."

5. NAYIF SHUBLAQ, CO-EDITOR OF LEADING LEFTIST PRO-FEDAYEEN
AL-MUHARRIR, WRITES: "WHAT CONCERNS US NOW IS FOREIGN POLICY
THAT U S WILL FOLLOW DURING ADMINISTRATION OF GERALD FORD....
ALL WE KNOW OF THE MAN IS THAT HE IS STRONG ADVOCATE OF
ZIONISM AND THAT WEAKNESS OF HIS PERSONALITY ON ONE HAND
AND HIS DESIRE FOR RE-ELECTION ON THE OTHER ARE LIKELY TO
MAKE HIM MORE SUBSERVIENT TO WORLD JEWRY THAN WE CAN IMAGINE.
THIS IS WHERE THE DANGER LIES. AND IN SPITE OF FACT THAT
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FORD ANNOUNCED IMMEDIATELY AFTER TAKING OFFICE THAT FOREIGN
POLICY OF U S WOULD NOT CHANGE AND WAS CAREFUL TO KEEP
HENRY KISSINGER AT HEAD OF STATE DEPT AS A SIGN OF
THIS, IT HAS BEEN NOTICED THAT HE IS VERY CAREFUL TO BE
QUICK IN COURTING ISRAEL AND WORLD JEWRY."

6. IN PARA 5 OF BEIRUT 9513, PLEASE CORRECT "FORCES"
TO READ "POWERS". THIS IS QUOTED IN NESA SPECIAL FILE.

ROSS

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